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Soviets outflanked on Latin aid program

MIAMI [UPI]—Moscow's ability to control events in Central America may be on the wane because aid from Western Europe and the Roman Catholic Church have had more effect than previously thought, a University of Miami study says.

The 31-page report released Sunday said the Soviet Union is increasing its presence in the daily lives of Central Americans, but is losing influence to the Catholic Church and Western trade.

Titled "Soviet Attitudes Toward Aid to, and Contacts with Central American Revolutionaries," the study was commissioned by the State Department's Bureau of Intelli-

gence and Research.

It contains previously unavailable data on Soviet involvement, said University of Miami professor Carl Jacobsen, a consultant to the State Department on Soviet matters and author of the study.

"MOSCOW'S PRESENCE in Central America emerges as both more extensive and more multifaceted than generally appreciated," said Jacobsen. In addition to its military and economic involvement, Moscow maintains "a slew of other contact points," he said.

The Soviet Union sponsors student exchanges, peace congresses, sports

and youth festivals, professional and trade associations and "friendship clubs," he noted.

Jacobsen's study is based on reports from western intelligence sources and on surveys of Soviet books, military journals and media coverage. The publications contained frequent comments on European presence and pervasive church influence in Central America, he said.

Japan's trade with Nicaragua has risen in reverse proportion to Washington's economic withdrawal, Jacobsen said. Algeria picked up the sugar crop that America stopped buying.

"AID FROM WESTERN Europe and [United Nations] agencies has been even more substantial, and hence crucial," Jacobsen said.

Italy, West Germany, Spain, Austria and Canada are sending food and economic aid to Central America. Sweden has sent money for transportation projects. Mexico and Venezuela have extended credits for oil purchases.

In Nicaragua, a mid-1983 analysis concluded half of the country's assistance came from Western Europe and Latin America, while only 20 percent came from Communist countries.